

After all, I think there's been a little over-reaction to this. The judge has lifetime tenure. So that to insulate the judge in our system from pressure, that does not mean that any judge should be entitled or any court should be entitled not only to lifetime tenure but a gag rule on everyone else.

So I supported the position taken by our United States Attorney in New York. On the other hand, I think that it's important not to get into the business of characterizing judges based on one decision they make. Judge Baer had a rehearing on it, made a decision, and I have nothing to add to what our United States Attorney said. But I think that it's very important that we say—at least for me to say—I support the system we have, I support the independence of the Federal judiciary. I do not believe that means that those of us who disagree with particular decisions should refrain from saying we disagree with them. It doesn't mean we won't obey them; we'll all obey them. But if we don't agree and we have reasons for not agreeing, we should be free to say that. And that's what I think should be done.

Now beyond that, however, I don't think it's fair to just characterize a judge or judges in some sort of sweeping way, as apparently members of the other party are now beginning to do. And I'm a little perplexed by that since I think only three of my judges had any—any of the ones I've appointed—had any Republicans voting against them. I believe all the rest of them went through without Republican opposition.

And there have been many articles talking about how, number one, the judges I have appointed had the highest ratings from the American Bar Association of any President since the appointments have been made; number two, they were more diverse in terms of gender and race; but number three, I have been criticized from all sides because they are less ideological. I didn't—I have tried to appoint good, sensible people to the bench.

So I hope that we won't have a big attempt to turn this into a political campaign issue. I think that it's obvious what is going on here. The people on the other side are sort of embarrassed about their crime record. They fought the crime bill. They fought the

100,000 police. They fought the Brady bill. They fought the assault weapons ban. They fought things that they used to say they were for, so now they think they can sort of get well by making some outrageous claims about the judges I have appointed.

But that does not mean that every American shouldn't feel free to express his or her opinion on a particular decision. That's why you give these judges the insulation, but you still permit the free debate.

Visiting Heads of State

Q. You talked about European heads of state who come to the United States to promote themselves. Were you referring to a specific case?

President Scalfaro. No, if I were referring to someone in particular, I would have said so. You know me better than that. I said that there is a tradition. It's not a new tradition, and you know it very well. This is the tradition that, following the Second World War, that heads of state come here because it's a huge publicity stunt that they used in their own countries, or they do it to promote themselves. I wanted to say that this is not my case, and I would be offended, and it would be a lack of respect for the United States and for the President of the United States, but also for Italy and for myself. And that's all I have to say.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 117th news conference began at 12:36 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. President Scalfaro spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Interview With Jon Miller and Fred Manfra of WBAL Radio in Baltimore, Maryland

April 2, 1996

Q. Here's the pitch to Bobby Bonilla, and Bonilla takes ball one outside. So I guess that ends some of the conversations about how Cone's arm is.

Hey, and look who just stopped in. Mr. President.

The President. How are you?

Q. How are you, Mr. President? Bill Clinton is here with us. The pitch to Bonilla——

The President. I'm the good luck charm when I'm on this radio——

Q. Oh, yeah, definitely. In fact, when you were with us last year, Bobby Bonilla came up and promptly hit one over the center field wall, and he drives this one deep into right center field——

The President. No, no. Yes.

Q. This one is bouncing over the wall.

The President. Ground rule double.

Q. And right after Bonilla hit that home run, then Ripken came up, and he did the same thing. In fact, President Clinton, you broadcast that Ripken home run which was an historic night. You were part of it. So let's go back now and take a listen here. This is how it happened.

[At this point, WBAL played an audiotape of the President's remarks in 1995.]

The President. That was a great day.

Q. We've played that 500 times since then, and everybody loves that. Here's Cal the following season as we pick up again, and President Clinton is here with us. And again, everybody with such indelible memories of that great night, Mr. President. What do you think now? Cal taking ball one from Appier.

The President. Well, he's got the only two RBI's, doesn't he?

Q. Two-run single in the first inning for Cal, and now we're a 2-2 ball game.

I'm glad you were able to come over today. We thought you might be able to be here yesterday, and then we got rained out. But we're very pleased——

The President. Beautiful day today, though, isn't it?

Q. Fantastic.

The President. And the wind's not too bad inside which is good.

Q. Two and 0 to Cal Ripken. Bonilla at second. Down around the knees.

The President. Strike.

Q. Two balls and one strike.

The President. A little too low to hit, though.

Q. Did you get a chance to see Cal before the game?

The President. Yes. He baited me about going out on the pitcher's mound because

last year I stood in front of the mound and started—[laughter]—so he said, you know, "That's what that mound is there for. You're supposed to step up on top of it." [Laughter]

Q. And he fouls it off back on the plate.

The President. So I asked him if he were baiting me. He said, "No, no." He said, "If you don't want to go out there and do what you're supposed to do, it's all right with me." [Laughter]

Q. Well that's great. You got the Ripken treatment.

The President. So I had to go up there and stand on the mound.

Q. You're like part of the family now if he was talking to you like that. Well, you stood up there, and you threw a strike in there. Nice going.

The President. It was a slow strike, but I got it over.

Q. Two and 2 to Cal Ripken, batting with two down and Bonilla at second in the last of the third inning. Kevin Appier.

The President. He hit a hard ball there. That was a hard, good double.

Q. Now the pitch. There's a looping liner. Shallow center——

The President. Get down. Get down.

Q. Base hit. Here comes Bonilla, and Ripken has done it again. Another Presidential base hit for Cal Ripken. We may have to have you on every time he bats.

Well, it looked like he got a little slider that kind of hung up there above the knees, and he bloomed it into shallow center. And Bobby Bonilla scored. I have a feeling that Alomar, Palmeiro, Bonilla, Ripken, they're going to combine for a few runs this year.

The President. They'll do well. And this guy, Surhoff, is good, too. He can hit.

Q. He hit .320 last year with Milwaukee. Very fine. Not a power-type hitter, but he gets the ball to all fields, and he takes ball one, down and in, on a breaking ball. One ball and no strikes.

Now last year you had your daughter, Chelsea, here and——

The President. She was here. She's a little jealous that I'm here today, but she had to go to school today. [Laughter] You know, she and her mother just took a wonderful trip. They went to see our forces in Bosnia, and then they went to Turkey and Greece. So

I told her she got to go to Turkey, Greece, and Bosnia, and I got to go to Baltimore. [Laughter]

Q. So you're even.

The President. That's the deal. That's right.

Q. Yeah, you're even. Here's a foul ball back into the upper deck. One ball, one strike, to Surhoff.

Well, we thought maybe she'd get spring break or something. Next time on opening day, declare spring break over here.

One ball, one strike——

The President. They missed so many days this winter; they need to go more, not less.

Q. That's right.

The President. It's good to see springtime out here, isn't it?

Q. It sure is.

The President. We had a tough winter.

Q. Baseball has brought the sunshine back. There's a pitch inside to Surhoff. Two and 1, the count.

The President. Look at the flag blowing up there. You'll see how hard the wind is, though, and you don't feel it in here which is good.

Q. Yeah, I've been downtown on top of one of the buildings. The flag is standing straight out at attention out there, but inside here, very comfortable.

But I was impressed. I mean, you walked out on the mound, and we've seen guys bounce them in there. But you put it right in. Did you warm up ahead of time?

The President. I did. I got to—hurry.

Q. Pop foul over third base side over into the seats, reaching in.

The President. He nearly got there, didn't he?

Q. Yeah. And not getting it was Lockhart. Gave it a good shot. Two and 2, the count.

Who warmed you up? You played catch with somebody?

The President. Well, Mr. Angelos threw me a few balls.

Q. Yeah?

The President. Yeah—[laughter]—believe it or not. We threw about 20 balls together, and then I threw about 20, 30 more balls down there, just fooling around. And then I came out and put a jacket on and a cap on.

Q. Two and 2 to Surhoff. And a fast ball tailing outside for a ball. Three and 2, the count.

Well, we put out tapes and CD's of the whole Ripken thing last September and raised money for charity.

The President. That's great.

Q. And everywhere we went after they completed that, people commenting about how much fun it was that you were on the air. And when Cal hit that home run, it was—there you were, the First Fan.

The President. Well, we were all so happy, you know. It was a—what?

Q. That's what B.J. Surhoff is saying as they call him out on strikes.

The President. It looked like it was inside, didn't it?

Q. Two feet inside, I thought. And that's what B.J.'s arguing, too. But he's called out on strikes.

The President. I told—I went down to see the umpires before the game, and I said that I really wanted to see them because they were the only people in the country that got second-guessed more than I did. [Laughter] So I like those guys. I'm for them, you know. They are the company misery loves. [Laughter]

Q. Well, that's it for the Orioles in the third inning. The President of the United States is here with us, Bill Clinton.

The President. One run on two hits.

Q. And one man left on.

The President. Yes.

Q. And at the end of three, it's the Orioles, 3; Kansas City, 2.

[At this point, WBAL took a commercial break.]

Q. Inning number four, now, at Camden Yards. Jon Miller, Fred Manfra, along with the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, as the Royals come to bat. The Orioles are back in front, 3 to 2. Johnny Daemon stands in, a left-handed hitter. Takes a strike from Mike Mussina.

President Clinton was just commenting to us between innings about what a beautiful scene it is here at Camden Yards.

The President. It's just magnificent today. I wish everybody could see it. It's so really beautiful.

Q. There's a pop-up, shallow left. Ripken, the shortstop, out. Near the foul line on the outfield grass. And he makes the catch.

The President. I think everybody here's having a good time. Just the feel of being here, you know, makes you so happy.

Q. You know, it's been said that—I mean, opening day in baseball really, actually for a baseball fan, carries all of the same sentiment that we ascribe to New Year's Eve, you know, a clean slate, a fresh start, high hopes.

The President. You bet.

Q. But it's even more tangible in baseball because we really know that they've got a shot.

Here is Michael Tucker, the clean-up man. Three to 2 for the Orioles. And the pitch, and it's a ball down and in.

Now you were telling us between innings that you had a chance to go down to Atlanta and see the layout there.

The President. I looked at the Olympic Stadium which is magnificent. The American people will love it. And then after the Olympics, a section in the back is going to be taken down like what we now see from here over center field, and it's going to be converted into the Braves' new stadium.

But the unique thing about it is, it's going to be—the base line is going to be even closer—I mean, the foul line is going to be even closer and the base line, too, to the stands than here. And home plate's going to be even tucked in tighter than here, so that the average distance from base line to the stands will be about 45 feet. And the major league ballpark average is something like 70 feet. So even though the Braves have this magnificent pitching staff, they're going to be tested because they won't get as many easy foul-outs.

Q. Here's a fly ball, shallow left. In comes Hammonds, and he makes the catch for out number two.

Well, that's a good point because, I mean, the current stadium in Atlanta probably has more foul territory than any other ball park.

The President. Yes. A little more than average, yeah.

Q. Yeah.

The President. But, I mean, the pitchers are fabulous. So they'll do fine. But it just interested me that they are going to have a little extra handicap there. And of course, vis-

iting pitching staffs as well. So they—arguably, it will be a fair fight on everything.

Q. So it sounds like they didn't ask Greg Maddux about how they should build that ballpark. [Laughter]

The President. Actually, I asked him about it when they were—when the Braves came to the White House for the World Series, and their starting—you know, their big four were all there, and they didn't seem too worried about it. They were ready to roll.

Q. If you're good, you're good.

The President. Yeah.

Q. Mussina here, I mean, there's less foul territory than average here, and doesn't seem to bother him much.

The President. He's a fine pitcher. Oh, he's so good.

Q. The batter is Keith Lockhart, and it's one ball and one strike.

The President. Mussina's got a great future, too. I mean, he's got a—young, strong.

Q. Young guy. Still lives in his hometown. Goes up and coaches the basketball team in his old high school. You know, instead of going off on some yacht to the south of France, I mean, he's just back home, and he likes to work with the young kids.

Two and 1 to Lockhart. Where are you headed now? You've got—

The President. I've got to go back to—the President of Italy is here today. And we're having the Italian state dinner tonight.

Q. Now, in fact, I understand that my buddy Keith Berman from ESPN is supposed to be a guest at that state dinner.

The President. I think that's right. I think he's going to be there.

Q. Well, keep him away from the President of Italy. That's all I can say. [Laughter]

The President. And we're going to have a lot of distinguished Italian-Americans.

Q. Two-2 pitch now to Lockhart. That's a base hit down the left field line. Hammonds hustles over to cut it off. Rounding first and holding is Lockhart with his second straight hit. Three to 2, Kansas City trailing the Orioles here in the fourth inning.

Well, that sounds like a great night. And again, we really appreciate your stopping by.

The President. Thanks. Glad to do it.

Q. Any time you feel like a ball game, well, stop by and visit us.

The President. You've got a deal.

Q. All right.

The President. Thank you.

Q. That's the President, Bill Clinton, threw out the first ball—threw a strike, I might add, and he actually warmed up, he said, with Orioles' Chairman of the Board Peter Angelos ahead of time.

The President. I did, and I was on the pitcher's mound because Ripken taunted me up there. [Laughter]

Thank you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. That's a pop-up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:21 p.m. in the WBAL broadcast booth at Orioles Park at Camden Yards. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Interview With Mel Proctor, Jim Palmer, and Mike Flanagan of Home Team Sports in Baltimore

April 2, 1996

Q. Welcome back to Camden Yards. The Orioles lead the Kansas City Royals 3–2. It is opening day, and President Bill Clinton was here today to throw out the first ball, and he'll be joining us momentarily, as soon as we get him miked up.

Well, we've got two right-handers, myself and Jim Palmer, and two left-handers in the booth now, Flanagan and the President.

Q. We finally have some balance up here.

Q. Can we get a Presidential chair in here? Thank you very much.

How are you, sir?

The President. Great. It's been a good game, don't you think?

Q. I agree.

The President. And a beautiful day.

Q. What was that first pitch you threw? Fast ball, slider, curve?

The President. It wasn't fast. It wasn't fast, but I had a good time.

Q. This is a good time of the year for you. I know you're a big college basketball fan, having gone to Arkansas. Unfortunately, the Razorbacks were eliminated, didn't make it to the finals.

The President. I was very proud of them. They started four freshmen and made it to

the Sweet 16, so I think they did well. It was a great tournament this year, I think. Everybody who watched the games must have felt it was a great tournament.

Q. I know you love being here on opening day.

The President. I do. And this has been exciting, you know? It's great to see this new Baltimore team. You know, they've got a chance to go all the way, and yet if my count's right, all their RBI's go to Mr. Ripken today.

Q. That's right. [Laughter]

Q. Yes, he got 30 percent of what he had in all spring training. And of course, they all want to get to the White House, because I know you had the Atlanta Braves there in early March.

The President. I did.

Q. I know you get out to a game or two during the season. Do you watch at the White House when you're home?

The President. I do quite often. I watch the games when they're on, especially at night. When I come home late at night and I'm kind of keyed up and I don't want to go to sleep, I often watch the games.

Q. A drive to right center field, Johnny Daemon makes the catch on the warning track.

The President. Great play. That's a great play.

Q. Johnny Daemon taking an extra base hit away from Chris Hoiles. So you were saying you watch our games late at night. I guess in essence what you're saying is that we put you to sleep.

The President. Or keep me awake. [Laughter]

Q. This is the youngster that last year, at Double A, got about 188 at bats, but the reason Bob Boone left him in center field, even though they have a very good center fielder in Tom Goodwin, is because of his ability to make plays like that.

Q. Here's Tony Tarasco, who struck out his first time up.

Q. Did you play baseball yourself in high school?

The President. My school didn't have a team, but we had church league and Boys Club. We had all those. I played in some of those teams when I was a kid. I loved it.